DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 325 086 IR 014 672

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TITLE A User Survey in the Asnuntuck LRC: A Report.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Facility Improvement; *Learning Resources Centers; *Library Services; Library Surveys; Questionnaires; *Reference Materials; Tables (Data); Two Year Colleges; *Use Studies
IDENTIFIERS Asnuntuck Community College CT

ABSTRACT

Asnuntuck, a small community college in north central Connecticut, has plans to expand its Learning Resource Center (LRC) not only physically, with the renovation of the entire building in which it is now housed, but also in terms of the materials and services it offers. As part of the planning process, the LRC conducted a user survey to solicit information from the college's faculty, staff, students, and other users about how they have used the LRC and how they would like the LRC to improve. A nine-item questionnaire was distributed to all faculty and staff and copies were made available for 1 week at the LRC circulation desk for students and other users. Analyses of the 44 responses received indicated that the primary reasons for using the LRC are to seek reference information and to do research either for teaching or writing papers. Time spent at the LRC by users varied evenly across the categories of more than 20 hours, 10-20 hours, 1-9 hours, and less than one hour. Suggestions for improvement included additional budget, personnel, facilities, books, and periodicals, as well as longer hours, more comfortable seating, and more study space. The responses are tallied in three tables, and a copy of the questionnaire is included. (DB)

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A USER SURVEY IN THE ASNUNTUCK LRC: A REPORT

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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A USER SURVEY IN THE ASNUNTUCK LRC: A REPORT

Asnuntuck is a small community college serving north central Connecticut. Currently, it occupies a twenty-five year old building previously used by a junior high school. It employs about 50 teaching faculty including part-time instructors, 30 administrative and counseling staff, and has an enrollment of about 1,800 (700 FTE) students.

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) at the college is housed in a location separated into two levels without an internal connection. It holds approximately 20,000 books, 250 periodical titles, 1,600 audiovisual items, 150 microcomputer software programs, and many other peripheral materials. The LRC is a participating member of OCLC (the Online Computer Library Center) and of CirCess, a local resource sharing and circulation system. It subscribes to the Dialog service and to Infotrac's Academic Index. As part of a statewide library automation project, it is working toward and in the testing stage for computerized public access catalog using Auto-graphics' "Impact" CD-ROM product. It has 2.5 professional librarians, one media specialist, two paraprofessionals, and several student assistants.

The college has procured funds and started to renovate the entire building. When the project is completed, the LRC will occupy new expended quarters with many new facilities. As part of the planning process, the LRC conducted a user survey recently to solicit information from the college's faculty, staff, students, and other users about how they have used the LRC and what they would

like the LRC to improve. The result of the survey is reported so that it may help other community and four year college libraries review their services. The survey may also provide ideas for these libraries to develop different studies appropriate to their own needs.

When the survey questionnaire was constructed, the consensus of the LRC staff was that it must be brief, simple, and no longer than one page because of the limited time of users. The completed questionnaire is attached in appendix A. A copy of the questionnaire was placed in each faculty and staff mailbox, including all part-time instructors. Sufficient copies were also placed on the circulation desk for students and other LRC users. The survey ran for one week from April 9 through 15. The answer to the survey was completely voluntary. No sampling and randomization were attempted.

A total of 44 responses were received. Among these reponses, 14 were from the faculty, 7 from the staff, and 23 from students. The data from the responses are compiled and arranged below in tables 1 - 3. The following is a summary derived from the compiled data. Note that on several occasions the total figures do not equal the sum of their parts because of rounding off or because some respondents did not answer each question accordingly.

Of the respondents, 30 (or 68%) indicated that they had used the LRC one or several times a week in the six months before the survey was conducted. Ten (or 23%) of these respondents reported that they were occasional users; 3 (or 7%) of them responded that they rarely used the LRC; and 1 respondent (2%) was a non-user. The

responses show that a higher percentage of the faculty and students (72% and 69% respectively) are regular LRC users (at least used once a week) than the staff (57%) are.

According to the responses, in the past six months, 10 (or 22%)

Table 1
Major Activities of Users Involved in the LRC
(No. of Responses)

	Faculy	%	Staff	%	Students	%	Total	%
Frequency of Using the LRC:								
Daily	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Several times a week	6	43	3	43	9	39	18	41
Once a week	4	29	1	14	7	30	12	27
Occasionally	3	21	1	14	6	26	10	23
Rarely	1	7	1	14	1	4	3	7
Never	0	0	1	14	0	0	1	2
Sum	14	100	7	100	23	100	44	100
Hours per Week of Using the LRC:								
More than 20 Hours	2	14	1	14	2	9	5	11
10 - 20 Hours	1	7	0	0	4	17	5	11
1 - 9 Hours	1	7	1	14	11	48	13	30
Less than 1 Hour	10	71	4	57	6	26	20	46
0	0	0	1	14	0	0	1	2
Sum	24	100	7	100	23	100	44	100
No. of Items Used or Checked Out in Six Months:								
20 or more items								
AV materials	1	7	1	14	0	0	2	5
Books	2	14	0	0	1	4	3	7
10 - 19 items								
AV materials	4	29	1	14	0	0	5	11
Books	4	29	1	14	2	9	7	16
1 - 9 items								
AV materials	4	29	3	43	5	22	12	27
Books	4	29	3	43	14	61	21	48
None								
AV materials	2	14	1	14	11	48	14	32
Books	1	7	2	29	5	22	8	18
Sum								
AV materials	11	79	6	86	16	70	33	75
Books	11	79	6	86	22	96	39	89
Have Users Recommended Library Materials for Purchase?								
Yes, many	5	36	1	14	0	0	6	14
Yes, some	6	43	1	14	1	4	8	18
No, none	3	21	5	71	21	91	29	66
Sum	14	100	7	100	22	96	43	98

of the patrons used the LRC 10 or more hours per week; 13 (or 30%) of them used the LRC 1 to 9 hours per week; and 21 (or 48%) of the respondents used the LRC less than 1 hour per week. The responses indicate that there is a higher proportion of students (26%) than of faculty (21%) and staff (14%) who used the LRC more than 10 hours per week. The data also indicate that there is a high proportion of the faculty and the staff (71% and 81% respectively) who used the LRC less than 1 hour per week in the period selected for the survey.

The compiled data reveal that, in the six months prior to the survey, 19 (or 43%) of the respondents used or borrowed at least 1 audiovisual item while 31 (or 71%) of them used or borrowed at least 1 book in the LRC. However, 14 (or 32%) of the respondents did not use any AV material, and 8 (or 18%) of the respondents did not use any book in the LRC. When the data are separated, the result indicates that 3 faculty, 3 staff, and 16 student respondents did not use any AV material or any book in the LRC.

Of the responses to the question about how the users were involved with LRC collection development, 14 (or 32%) of the users indicated that they did recommend some library materials to the LRC. On the other hand, 29 (or 66%) of the respondents reported that they did not make any recommendation to the LRC. When the data are broken down into categories, it is seen that most faculty respondents (79%) had played a role in recommending materials to the LRC. There is, however, only 1 student (4%) who had made some recommendations.

The data in table 2 show that the users' primary reasons for using the LRC are in this order: (1) to seek reference information, (2) to do research for teaching or papers, and (3) to use the equip-

Table 2
Primary Reasons for Using the LRC
1 = highest priority
9 = lowest priority

	Faculty	Staff	Students	Average
• Do class assignments	7	7	4	6
• For interlibrary loans	4	5	8	5
• Recreational/informational reading	5	3	7	4
• Research for teaching or papers	2	4	2	2
• Seek reference information	1	1	1	1
• Use copy machine	8	7	3	6
• Use equipment	3	2	6	3
• Use space for studying	6	6	5	5
• Other	6	7	9	7

ment. Nevertheless, to use the LRC for recreational/informational reading (priority no. 3) is ranked higher than to do research (priority no. 4) by the staff. To use the copy machine (priority no. 3) and to do class assignments (priority no. 4) were ranked higher than to use the equipment (priority no. 6) by students.

When the users were asked what things they like most in the LRC, many faculty, staff, and students responded with favorable opinions of the LRC staff for their helpfulness, courtesy, knowledge, etc. Several students indicated their appreciation of the availability and accessibility of different information sources. In the meantime, the respondents also suggested many items for improvement, such as additional budget, personnel, facilities, books, periodicals, etc. for longer hours and better service. Some of the suggestions such as space, seating, one unique and connected location, etc. are related to the physical limitations of the current building, which are expected to be at least partially solved when the renovation project of the college is completed.

Table 3
Users' Opinions about the LRC
(No. of responses is indicated if more than 1)

	Faculty	Staff	Students
• The Merits of the LRC:			
- The staff -- They are helpful, friendly, courteous, approachable, cooperative, flexible, supportive, efficient, knowledgeable	10	5	14
- The list of new materials	x		
- The CCH Federal Tax Guide	x		
- The accounting homework solutions manual	x		
- The prevailing academic image	x		
- The staff's willingness to recycle paper	x		
- AV materials, equipment, and services	x	x	2
- The staff's willingness to consider new acquisitions	x		
- The organization of library materials	x		
- The appropriate room temperature -- cool in summer and warm in winter	x		
- The staff's willingness to go out of their way to obtain materials for users		x	
- The feedback when a request is made		x	
- The copy machine -- only 5c per copy			4
- The availability and accessibility of different information sources	x		9
- A quiet place for studying (one response from a mother of two small children)			4
- Infotrac			3
- Convenience to the users			2
- The reading space			x
- The different maps			x
- Computer hardware and software			x
- Non-smoking environment			x
• Recommendations for Improvements:			
- To have a couple of French movies	x		
- To have a unique and connected location	3		5
- To have many more AV materials	x		
- Not to change things too often	x		
- The renovation be completed ASAP	x		
- To have access to video equipment when the LRC is closed	x		
- Different request forms be also available outside the LRC	x		
- To have additional budget, personnel, and/or facilities	3	x	4
- To have more materials to represent "liberationist" views -- of minorities, women, general psychological developments, etc.	x		

- To add a few small glassed-in conference and private study rooms	x		
- To acquire many more books, reference tools, and/or periodicals	2		5
- To have quicker access to periodical articles not available in the LRC	x		
- To have a quicker way to access bibliograpic information on various topics	x		
- To keep the LRC cleaner, quieter, and without smoking -- The staff should sometimes lower their voices	x	2	3 x
- To enhance and update the computer hardware and software in the LRC	x		
- To extend library hours		x	x
- To have new carpet		x	
- To have better security on VHS tapes		x	
- To keep on growing		x	
- To have more study space and comfortable seats			9
- To add study carrels			x
- To have the NEC printer fixed			x
- To acquire many more current publications (e.g., 1985 or later ed. of psychological books)			x
- To update reference books			x

Appendix A
L. R. C. QUESTIONNAIRE

To help us learn more about how you use the LRC and how we can improve its services to meet your needs, the LRC staff would appreciate your taking a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Please leave it in the box at the circulation desk in the LRC by Aril 15. Thank you.

1. Name (optional):
2. Status: ___ Faculty ___ Staff ___ Student ___ Other

3. How often have you used the LRC in the past six months?

__ Daily
__ Several times a week
__ Once a week
__ Occasionally
__ Rarely
__ Never

4. About how long have you spent in the LRC in the past six months?

__ More than 20 hours a week
__ 10 - 20 hours a week
__ 1 - 9 hours a week
__ Less than 1 hour a week
__ No time

5. Why do you use the LRC? (Please place a number in front of each reason: 1 for highest priority and 9 for lowest priority).

__ Use copy machine
__ Study (using my own books)
__ Research for teaching or papers
__ Use equipment
__ Do class assignments
__ Seek reference information
__ Recreational/informational reading
__ Interlibrary loan
__ Other (please specify)____

6. About how many library materials have you used or checked out of the LRC in the past six months?

	20 or more	10 - 19	1 - 9	None
AV materials	__	__	__	__
Books	__	__	__	__

7. Have you recommended any book or other material to the LRC for purchase in the past six months?

__ Yes, many __ Yes, some __ No, none

8. Please list three things you like most about the LRC:

a.
b.
c.

9. Please list three improvements you would recommend for the LRC:

a.
b.
c.